

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. In a confidential conversation, the Italian Foreign Trade Minister, Ivan Matteo Lombardo* (generally pro-American), was highly critical of American propaganda methods in Europe, specifically he claimed that the American media, including the Voice of America and "secret" activities have brought about a misunderstanding of the nature of the Communist threat in Europe and have confused the Soviet imperialist menace with the ideological threat. Generally they paint an all black or white picture which has resulted in a fear psychosis in view of the completely different emotional approach of Europeans. In this latter connection, Lombardo pointed to the undeniable gains made by the Stockholm Peace Appeal and the neutrality drive in Germany.
2. Lombardo is appalled by American propaganda treatment of recent resignations of Italian Communists. He is well acquainted with most of the defectors and claims that there has not been the slightest ideological change. He had no evidence, but, he believes that the resignations might have been ordered by Moscow as a tactical move to confuse the democratic forces and further split the anti-Communist vote in the coming Italian municipal elections. In any case, Lombardo believes that the dissident Communists will enter their own ticket in the coming elections and draw more votes from "their right than left". The result will be two strong Communist parties in Italy, one of which will have some nationalistic coloring. The playing up of dissidents as heroes is completely false. As heretofore they represent a menace to "democratic ideals".

Comment: Lombardo expects to come to Washington in the near future for trade talks. His visit here will coincide with the trip of German Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard.

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